

Japanese Fairy Tale Series, No. 14.

THE PRINCES
FIRE-FLASH & FIRE-FADE.

Told in English by Mrs. T. H. James.



日本昔噺

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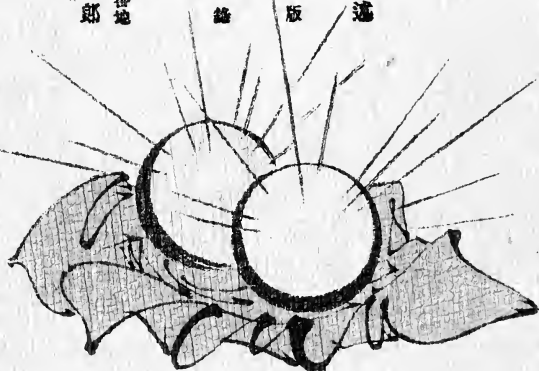
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→*THE PRINCES*←

FIRE-FLASH FIRE-FADE.

 HIS Highness Fire-flash was a Prince who was fond of fishing; and so great was his luck, that big fishes, and little fishes, and all kinds of fishes came to his line. His younger brother, Prince Fire-fade, was fond of hunting, and all his luck was on the hills, and in the woods, where he caught birds and beasts of every kind.

One day Prince Fire-fade said to his elder brother Prince Fire-flash: "Let us change. You go and hunt instead of me, and I will try my luck at fishing, if you will lend me your line and hook." Prince Fire-flash did not care much to change,



and at first said No; but his brother kept on teasing him about it, until at last he said, "Very well, then; let us change."

Then Prince Fire-fade tried his luck at fishing, but not a single fish did he catch; and, what was worse, he lost his brother's fish-hook in the sea.

Prince Fire-flash asked him for the hook, saying: "Hunting is one thing, and fishing is another. Let us both go back to our own ways."

Then said Prince Fire-fade, "I did not catch a single fish with your hook, and at last I lost it in the sea.

But Prince Fire-flash said: "I must and shall have my fish-hook." So the younger brother broke his long sword, that was girded on him, and, of the pieces, made five hundred fish-hooks, and begged Prince Fire-flash to take them, but he would not. Then Prince Fire-fade made a thousand fish-hooks and said: "Please take them instead of the one which I lost." But the elder brother

said: "No, I must have my own
hook, and I will not take any other."





Then Prince Fire-fade was very sorry, and sat down by the sea shore, crying bitterly.

By and by the Wise Old Man of the Sea came to him and asked: "Why are you crying so bitterly Prince Fire-fade?" Fire-fade told him all the story of the lost fish-hook, and how that his brother was angry, still saying that he must have that very same hook and no other. Then the Wise Old Man of the Sea built a stout little boat, and made Prince Fire-

fade sit in it. Having pushed it a little from the land, he said: "Now go on for some time in the boat; it will be very pleasant, for the sea is calm. Soon you will come to a palace built like fishes' scales: this is the palace of the Sea-King. When you reach the gate, you will see a fine cassia-tree, growing above the well, by the side of the gate. If you will sit on the top of that tree, the Sea-King's daughter will see you, and tell you what to do."



So Prince Fire-fade did as he was told, and every thing came to pass just as the Wise Old Man of the Sea had told him. As soon as he was come to the Sea-King's palace, he made haste, and climbed up into the cassia-tree, and sat there. Then came the maidens of the Princess Pearl, the Sea-King's daughter, carrying golden water-pots. They were just going to draw water, when they saw a flood of light upon the well. They looked up, and there in the cassia-tree, was a beautiful young

man. Prince Fire-fade saw the maidens, and asked for some water. The maidens drew some, and put it in a golden cup, and gave him to drink. Without tasting the water, the Prince took the jewel that hung at his neck, put it between his lips, and let it drop into the golden cup. It stuck to the cup, so that the maidens could not take it off; so they brought the cup, with the jewel on it, to the Princess Pearl.

When she saw the jewel, the Princess asked her maidens: "Is

there any one inside the gate?"

So the maidens answered: "There is some one sitting on the top of the cassia-tree, above our well. It is a beautiful young man,—more beautiful even than our King. He asked for water, and we gave him some; but, without drinking it,



he dropped this jewel from his lips into the cup, and we have brought it to you." Then Princess Pearl, thinking this very strange, went out to look. She was delighted at the sight. But not giving the Prince time to take more than one little peep at her, she ran to tell her father, saying; "Father, there is a beautiful person at our gate."

Then the Sea-King himself went out to look. When he saw the young man on the top of the tree, he knew that it must be Prince Fire-fade.



He made him come down, and led him into the palace, where he seated him upon a throne made of sea-asses' skins, and silk rugs, eight layers of each. Then a great feast was spread, and every one was so kind to Prince Fire-fade, that the end of it was, he married Princess Pearl, and lived in that land for three years.

Now, one night, when the three years had almost passed, Prince Fire-fade thought of his home, and what had happened there, and heaved

one deep sigh.

Princess Pearl was grieved, and told her father, saying; "We have been so happy these three years, and he never sighed before, but, last night, he heaved one deep sigh. What can the meaning of it be?" So the Sea-king asked the Prince to tell him what ailed him, and also what had been the reason of his coming to that land. Then Prince Fire-fade told the Sea-King all the story of the lost fish-hook, and how his elder brother had behaved.

The Sea-King at once called together all the fishes of the Sea, great and small, and asked; "Has any fish taken this fish-hook?"



So all the fishes said; "The *tai** has been complaining of something sticking in his throat, and hurting him when he eats, so perhaps he has taken the hook."

So they made the *tai* open his mouth, and looked in his throat, and there, sure enough, was the fish-hook. Then the hook was washed and given to Prince Fire-fade. The Sea-King also gave him two jewels. One was called the tide-flowing jewel, and the other was called the tide-ebbing jewel. And

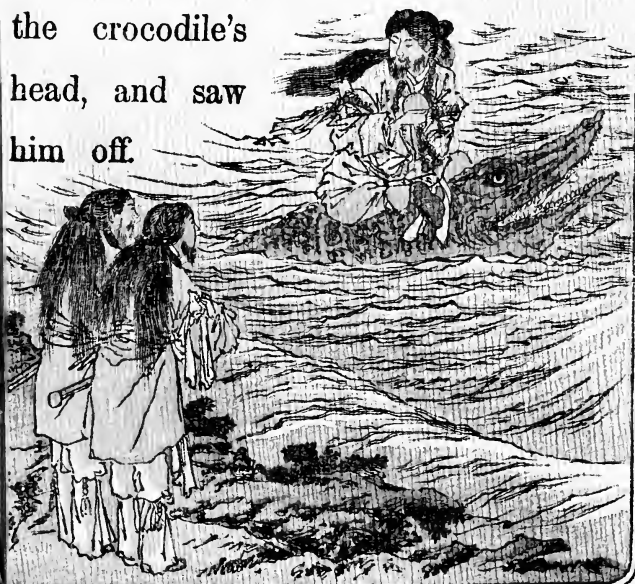
*A kind of fish.

he said then to the Prince; "Go home now to your own land, and take back the fish-hook to your brother. In this way you shall plague him. If he plant rice-fields in the upland, make you your rice-fields in the valley; and if he make rice-fields in the valley, do you make your rice-fields in the upland. I will rule the water so that it may do good to you, but harm to him. If Prince Fire-flash should be angry with you for this, and try to kill you; then put out

the tide-flowing jewel, and the tide will come up to drown him. But if he is sorry, and asks pardon, then put out the tide-ebbing jewel, and the tide will go back, and let him live."

Then the Sea-King called all the crocodiles, and said; "His Highness Prince Fire-fade is going to the upper world; which of you will take him there quickly, and bring me back word?" And one crocodile, a fathom long, answered; "I will take him to the upper world, and come

back in a day." "Do so, then" said the Sea-King, and be sure that you do not frighten him as you are crossing the middle of the sea." He then seated the Prince upon the crocodile's head, and saw him off.



The crocodile brought him safe home, in one day, as he had promised. When the crocodile was going to start back again, Prince Fire-fade untied the dirk from his own belt, and setting it on the creature's neck, sent him away.

Then Prince Fire-fade gave the fish-hook to his elder brother; and, in all things, did as the Sea-King had told him to do. So from that time, Prince Fire-flash became poor, and came with great fury to kill his brother. But, just in time, Prince

Fire-fade put forth the tide-flowing
jewel to drown him. When he found
himself in such danger,
Prince Fire-flash said
he was sorry.



So his brother put forth the tide-
ebbing jewel
to save
him.



When he had been plagued in this way for a long time, he bowed his head, saying; "From this time forth, I submit to you, my younger brother. I will be your guard by day and by night, and in all things serve you." His struggles in the water, when he thought he was drowning, are shown at the Emperor's Court even to this very day.



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